



FINAL

**Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
September 21, 2006
Hearing and Speech Agency, Auditorium: Baltimore, MD**

Attendance:

Members: Alexis Allenback, Vanessa Antrum, Benjamin Dubin, Lindsay Dunn, Ethelette Ennis, Paul Farrell, Joshua Friedman, Will Johnson, George Kosovich, Howard Leonard, Julie Moyer, James Tucker, Linda Webb, Julie Moyer, John Gaver, Robert Padden (for James Tucker) and Michelle Schaefer

Visitors: Havalah Neboschick, Laurie Yaffe, Lee Smith, Kim Smith, Scott Wilson, and Michael Kafes

Staff: Yvonne Dunkle, Denise Perdue and Sasha Ponappa (Intern)

Interpreters: Nancy Bender and Erin Hairston

Typewell Transcription Provider: Diane Vaccaro

Meeting convened at 2:28 pm

Welcome and Introductions: Ben Dubin called the meeting to order with introductions. Members and visitors introduced themselves.

Review and approval of the minutes from June 15, 2006

Additions: none offered

Corrections: Presented by Howard Leonard (previously been sent to ODDH staff via email)

Moved to accept with corrections: Will Johnson

Seconded: Linda Webb

Vote: Unanimous

Ben Dubin: request that all changes happen within 30 days following the meeting.

Special Presentation of Governor Citations Presented by Havalah Neboschick: To Susan Glasgow, Executive Director of the Hearing and Speech Agency (HASA) for their exemplary service to the Advisory Council and the other members of the Maryland Advisory Council who have completed their first three year term. Members acknowledged for completing their first terms include:

Mary Pat Bromwell

James Tucker

Benjamin J. Dubin

Vanessa Antrum

Lindsay Dunn

Linda Webb

Ethelette Ennis

Pamela Jenkins-Dobson

Diane Edge

Will Johnson

Joshua Friedman

John Gaver

Howard Leonard

Alexis Allenback

New Business

A. Elections

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Nomination Committee members: John Gaver and Lindsay Dunn opened nominations from the floor.

John Gaver: Read the Advisory Council bylaws that state eligibility requirements – the chair must come from the private sector and vice chair must be from state government and both must be “a member of good standing”. The term “in good standing” was also read to the membership.

Will Johnson: Nominates Linda Webb as Vice Chair.

Linda Webb: Declines the nomination.

Howard Leonard: Both Ben and myself will be leaving the Advisory Council next year. Other members should know that serving as Chair and Vice Chair is a possibility when you accept your appointment to serve on this council.

Ben Dubin: When the Bylaws were written they were written with the clear intention that the Chair should be an “independent” person and not a state employee.

Nominations Committee recommends that Ben Dubin and Alexis Allenback remain in their current positions one additional year. **Vote:** Unanimous

B. Public Forum

Yvonne Dunkle: The law governing the Advisory Council and ODHHS requires that we hold two public forums per year and that they rotate around the state. Open the topic for discussion:

Ben Dubin: The goal of Town Hall meetings is to generate input from the public. The enabling statute says that the Council will hold two Town Hall meetings per year. Here to for we have held public meetings at the conclusion of the Advisory Council quarterly meetings. There is nothing in the statute that says the Council will hold “public forums”. The present structure to obtain community input does not seem to be working. I recommend that a topic and agenda be established for a “forum” or “town hall” and that be advertised and held separate from Council meetings.

Howard Leonard: Can someone call ODHHS to request they want to present something to the Council at our quarterly meetings?

Denise Perdue: There is nothing that precludes anyone from doing so.

Ben Dubin: Requests that if someone wants to bring up a specific issue that they contact the chair in advance to place their issue or concern on the agenda.

Lindsay Dunn: Recommends that Town Hall meetings also be held on Saturdays and in various locations to attract people who will educate us on specific areas.

George Kosovich: One and a half years ago a coalition of deaf and hard of hearing people and organizations was established with the express intent to address statewide issues facing deaf and hard of hearing people.

Lee Smith: (visitor) Explained that a coalition had been established and met several times but because of leadership issues the group disbanded. Could they be integrated into this organization (MD Advisory Council)?

Ben Dubin: The Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was established by law. The law clearly defines the membership and appointment process. However, this past summer the Council established four subcommittees and membership on those committees was opened up to include stakeholders from around Maryland and from various organizations and agencies.

Ethelette Ennis: Emphasized that the public forums and the Advisory Council meetings need to be held in the late afternoon and evening so that members of the deaf and hard of hearing community can participate. Right now members of the community feel that the state is not listening to them and their needs.

General Discussion: Suggestions include holding Town Hall meetings on Saturdays for 3-4 hours and some be held during the week in the evening. Also a suggestion to hold a late afternoon Advisory Council meeting with dinner and then followed it with a Town Hall meeting. Some members felt strongly that even though ODHH holds the Town Hall meetings, Advisory Council members need to attend so that the public becomes familiar with members that represent them. ODHH has received feedback from the community that Town Hall meetings should be held in conjunction with deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing events and not as separate event. Regardless of the structure ODHH staff ask that each of the state agencies send a representative to participate in Town Hall meetings as perhaps a “panel” so that any issues raised that affect your agency be addressed.

ACTION ITEM: For ODHH to plan two Town Hall meetings for 2007. That dates, times and locations be made with consideration to the constituents served. That one is held on a weekday evening (possibly after an Advisory Council meeting) and one on a weekend. Advisory Council member should attend Town Hall meetings even if the meeting is not part of a quarterly meeting.

15 minute break

C. Meeting Location Rotations

Ben Dubin: Suggests that the Council continue to meet at the Hearing and Speech Agency (HASA) from 2-5 pm without an allotted time for a public forum.

Ethelette Ennis: Suggests the time period be from 3-6 pm to accommodate the public to come observe after the normal workday has ended.

Consensus Vote: By a show of hands the majority supported the 2-5 pm time frame.

Ben Dubin: There is a need to change the next Council meeting to December 7 from December 14 as earlier decided. All concurred.

Chairperson Report: Ben Dubin

Ben Dubin: I did not send a written report electronically report as was suggested at the last meeting. Briefly, I have attended many meetings over the summer and early fall (Task Force, Emergency Preparedness, AGB to name a few) as an advocate and as a representative of the Advisory Council. The Baltimore County Committee on Emergency Preparedness had made a video on people with disabilities preparing for an emergency and will have a public showing on October 3 . The initial showing will not be captioned but the final version will be captioned when released. It will be distributed around the state to first responders.

Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Committee (UNHS) will hold its next meeting on October 4.

Denise Perdue: Was asked to briefly bring members up to date on the Task Force on Visual Smoke and Evacuation Alarms for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People. The committee met in June, July, August and September, which enabled them to complete the necessary task in a timely manner. The final report was approved and sent to the printer this week.

Director's Report:

Yvonne Dunkle electronically sent her report to members prior to the meeting. A few highlights include: The SHA/ADA committee minutes are included in your packets today. ODHH will be involved in MDOT's upcoming accessibility conference both as a presenter and exhibitor. Lastly, ODHH's website has been transferred from the contractor to the Department of Natural Resources webmaster but there are internal technical issues that need to be worked on before a launch date can be issued. DNR will also make sure that the web site is 508 compliant.

Subcommittee Reports:

Ben Dubin: One complaint about holding the meetings in the MDOD conference room is their front door entry system is not accessible to deaf and hard of hearing people. I sent an email to John Brennon, Chief of Staff for MDOD, requesting accommodations be made.

Yvonne Dunkle: MDOD has asked researched possible solutions based on Ben's recommendations and they have indicated that to change to glass doors would cost \$2000. John Brennon has asked if ODHH could share the cost to make the accommodations. ODHH is not able to contribute to the cost. MDOD is continuing to look for other more cost effective solutions.

Lindsay Dunn: Reported for the **Educational Subcommittee**. He indicated he would like Paul Farrell to serve as co-chair. The subcommittee held its first meeting on August 21. There was good discussion, which generated many issues (attached). The subcommittee feels there is a need to keep the number of members small enough to better address issues. He plans to make a list of key advocacy groups and agencies that would be vital to submit any relevant reports to the subcommittee for their study.

Ben Dubin: Reported for the **Legislative Subcommittee**. The subcommittee first plans, with the help of Legislative Services, to examine all state regulations and policy that has any impact to deaf and hard of hearing people. Second they will compare the results of that analysis with what should be in law or policy but is not. The study will also include antiquated policy that should be updated.

Howard Leonard: Reported for the **Mental Health Subcommittee**. The Minutes from our most recent meeting (September 7) are not yet complete. At that meeting we had a presentation from Tom Merrick who works for MDOD as the liaison to DHMH's Mental Health Transformation Grant Work Group (TWG). He explained the purpose, goals and outcomes expected from the \$13.5 million dollar award. The TWG has completed its first deliverable-- a 300-page needs assessment survey. The needs assessment survey did not include any input from service providers/professionals working in the field of deafness but did report, one strength in Maryland is its mental health services to deaf and hard of hearing people at one state facility. Our Advisory Council's Mental Health Subcommittee was invited to select two individuals to represent the subcommittee for the next stage of the grant, which is determining performance measures. The TWG has scheduled two meetings on October 23 & 30. Our two representatives to those meetings are Laurie Yaffe and Lisa Kornberg. Additionally, the subcommittee has invited Dr. Hepburn, Director of MHA, to meet with us, later this fall, to discuss our concerns regarding the status of mental health services for deaf and heard of hearing people in Maryland. The next meeting of the subcommittee will be November 9 at 217 E. Redwood Street in the conference room.

Ethelette Ennis reported for the **Communication Access Subcommittee**: the minutes are not yet complete from the last meeting. We are working on generating a list of issues.

Howard Leonard: Attended a meeting this morning for higher education and disability services. At that meeting there was a discussion about the shortage of transcribers and interpreters. ODHH is not the only entity to be discussing this issue.

Ben Dubin: While perusing the NAD Center for Law and the Deaf's website I noticed there are two lawsuits involving deaf and hard of hearing people going on in Maryland. One is the communication access issue at the Redskin's Stadium and the other about interpreter issues at Baltimore-Washington Medical Center (formerly North Arundel Hospital). ODHH should keep up on these cases and other issues in Maryland.

Yvonne Dunkle: Responds that ODHH is on top of these issues.

Follow up regarding Action Items issued during the June 15 meeting (attached):

-Pamela Dobson will try to get as much information regarding unresolved/resolved cases before the Human Rights Commission and bring it to our next meeting in December.

-Yvonne reports that ODHH has work with Laurie Yaffe regarding a letter of support for DASAM issues.

OLD BUSINESS

John Gaver: MDOT revising the executive order creating membership to the SHA ADA Advisory Council adding ODHH as a member.

Ben Dubin: Regarding outreach activities and attending meetings Denise and Yvonne need to allocate their time differently. With limited staff resources there needs to be office coverage. Advisory Council members should volunteer more time to assist in working the ODHH exhibit booth at conferences and fairs.

Meeting Adjourn 5:26 pm **Next meeting:** December 7, 2006 **Location:** Hearing and Speech Agency, Auditorium

Public Forum:

Lee Smith, MDAD President: Passed out copies of questions developed by MDOD and presented to the Maryland Disabilities Forum for consideration to be asked of the Gubernatorial candidates at past and upcoming forums. Also MDAD plans to work with Judy Stout to meet with candidates and present deaf and hard of hearing community issues directly to them.

I agree with Ben that there needs to be more Deaf community involvement in the Advisory Council meetings and public forums but the meeting times are not conducive to people who are employed during the day. We are advocates for our community needs and issues but it is not fair to expect advocates to use their personal or vacation time to attend these meetings.

ODHH should have an ASL Blog. A method of communicating to the Deaf community in sign language. Sign language Blogs are becoming popular in Europe and United Kingdom.

Adjourn Public Forum at 5:40 pm